

## State of Connecticut - Appropriation Committee Hearing - February 18, 2010

*Submitted by Claire C. Phelan of 7 Grove Street in Milford, Connecticut*

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My name is Claire Phelan. I am chairperson of the Board of Directors of Bridges, a non-profit Behavior Health agency located in Milford. Our agency has been serving the greater Milford area since 1957. It has grown from serving hundreds of people a year to over 5,000 last year.

Our Board members are very concerned that programs and services we provide for some of our most vulnerable citizens are at risk for crippling cuts in this budget, **seriously impacting our ability to see them through their efforts and hopes for recovery.**

I am a life long resident in Milford and have had the privilege of knowing many families who use the services that Bridges provides. I know of their struggles and I know of their successes. I know of the services that are most supportive and helpful for our clients and I know the devastation to those clients if the services are no longer available.

The budget hearings and process are always of great interest to me. But I am disheartened as I listen to the many advocates coming to testify and talk about how they and their clients too are facing serious consequences resulting from budget cuts and years of no increases.

I am disheartened for you as well, because of the enormous task before you. I wish I had good solutions for the full scope of our State's fiscal dilemma. I do not.

But I can assert that the community-based services you fund at Bridges are saving the State millions of dollars a year by assuring that hundreds of adults and children are supported and sustained in their community, with their families, on their jobs and at school.

I also know, in the years my own family faced economic strains, our four children's care and well being was not compromised.

They trusted and depended on my husband and me to make decisions that protected and nourished them.

You and I can and should not do less for those in our care.